

The World Bank and other international financial institutions have weighed in with infrastructure and privatization assistance. Together we have the rare potential to work collectively with a government to substantially improve the lives of its people. Many problems remain. The transition from an isolated society where nearly everyone was poor to a democracy where there will be those with more than others will not be easy. For example, the distinctions between equal opportunity and equal outcome are no more easily understood in Albania than is apparent from the current debate in the US over affirmative action.

On the political side, the US and Albania are beginning to cooperate diplomatically and militarily on regional issues. Albania occupies an important strategic position in the southern Balkans and has begun to play a stabilizing role in preventing the spread of the Bosnia conflict. As a long time resident in a tough neighborhood, Albania can provide the US with a vital local perspective. The bottom line is that Albania, a tiny nation with which the US has previously had virtually nonexistent relations, has the potential to become an important ally with a growing comity of interests. In the process, I believe we may be creating a model for future US foreign policy that cuts across traditional political and ideological lines. We are doing what we always say US foreign policy is supposed to do—promote democracy and the development of the private sector. And from a geostrategic point of view we are establishing an important alliance in an increasingly unstable region.

When first appointed to the enterprise fund board, I must admit I had to look at a map to see exactly where Albania was. Albanian President Berisha will visit the US in September. US policymakers should take the opportunity to take out their maps. They may be surprised by the opportunity for a bipartisan foreign policy success.●

REVISED CONFEREES—S. 219 AND S. 4

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask unanimous consent that the following be considered the revised list of conferees to accompany S. 219, the regulatory reform bill, and S. 4, the line-item veto bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the list was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 219: Mr. Stevens, Mr. Nickles, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Glenn, Mr. Levin, and Mr. Reid.

S. 4: Mr. Stevens, Mr. Roth, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Cochran, Mr. McCain, Mr. Glenn, Mr. Levin, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. Domenici, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Nickles, Mr. Gramm, Mr. Coats, Mr. Exon, Mr. Hollings, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Dodd.

RELATIVE TO POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRISONERS IN VIETNAM

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 174, submitted earlier today by Senator GRAMS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 174), expressing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of

State should aggressively pursue the release of political and religious prisoners in Vietnam.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today I am submitting Senate Resolution 174, which expresses the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of State should aggressively pursue the release of political and religious prisoners in Vietnam.

My resolution has been prompted by the recent sentencing of two American citizens for attempting to organize a conference in Vietnam to discuss democracy and human rights. These two American citizens, Mr. Nguyen Tan Tri and Mr. Tran Quang Liem, were detained for 2 years by the Vietnamese without charge. Mr. Tri has now been sentenced to a 7-year prison term and Mr. Liem to 4 years. Both are in ill health.

The resolution calls for the Secretary of State to pursue the release of these two prisoners as well as other American citizens—I understand that American citizens from the State of Virginia are imprisoned in Vietnam as well—and all political and religious prisoners in Vietnam.

The President has just normalized relations with Vietnam. I supported normalization, because I believe it will give us more leverage with the Vietnamese Government to pursue outstanding issues such as MIA's/POW's and the release of those imprisoned in violation of international law after expressing political and religious views. Not only are people jailed for espousing political views, but those who seek religious freedoms are as well. Persecution of Buddhist leaders is rampant. Catholic and other Christian leaders have also been imprisoned allegedly for political activities under the guise of their religion.

I was disappointed that Secretary Christopher and Secretary Lord did not address this matter with Vietnamese officials in Vietnam shortly after normalization was announced. While I appreciate the efforts of consular officers in Vietnam and lower-level State Department officials to address this matter with their peers in the Vietnamese Government, I believe this issue should have been addressed directly by Secretary Christopher.

Mr. President, I am told that Vietnam has now agreed to retry the cases of at least the two Americans. We do not know when, or if, that may occur. In my judgment, it is important to pass this resolution immediately to show Senate support for a quick resolution of this situation.

Passage of this resolution is being coordinated with other concerned governments. Last week the Canadian Parliament adopted a similar resolution, and the Australian Parliament will adopt one very shortly.

If we are to have a diplomatic relationship with Vietnam, we must work with them at the highest levels of government to urge them to honor their

commitment under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by releasing all religious and political prisoners. We must also urge Vietnam to continue our efforts to obtain a full accounting of MIA's/POW's.

I urge my colleagues to support the effort to pass this resolution under unanimous consent today.

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 174) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S.RES 174

Whereas there are many outstanding issues between the United States and Vietnam including a full accounting of MIAs/POWs; pursuit of democratic freedoms in Vietnam, including freedom of expression and association; and resolution of human rights violations;

Whereas the Government of Vietnam continues to imprison political and religious leaders to suppress the nonviolent pursuit of freedom and human rights;

Whereas the Government of Vietnam has not honored its commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights;

Whereas two American citizens, Mr. Nguyen Tan Tri and Mr. Tran Quang Liem, are among those recently sentenced to prison terms of 7 and 4 years, respectively, for their efforts to organize a conference, after 2 years of detention without charge; and

Whereas these two Americans are in poor health and are not receiving proper treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate hereby—

(1) Urges the Secretary of State to pursue the release of the American prisoners as well as all political and religious prisoners in Vietnam as a matter of the highest priority;

(2) requests that the Secretary of State submit regular reports to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate regarding the status of the imprisonment and wellbeing of the two American prisoners; and

(3) requests that the President meet with relatives of the two Americans at his earliest convenience.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President and the Secretary of State.

SIGNING OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 171, relating to the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles, and that the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.